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National Intelligence Daily (Cable)

22 November 1982

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CPAS NIDC 82-272C

22 November 1982

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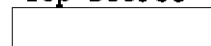


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INTERNATIONAL: The GATT Ministerial Meeting

//The atmosphere is bound to be contentious when the trade ministers from the 88 members of the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade meet on Wednesday.// [redacted]

Comment: //The drawn-out recession and associated decline in world trade have forced governments to become increasingly protective of their own economic interests. This has led to a growing number of disputes among trading partners in which GATT rules and procedures have more often than not been ignored.// [redacted]

//Some OECD countries, inclined toward free trade, join the US in seeing the Ministerial as an opportunity to halt the erosion of GATT authority. The tone of the meeting generally will be set by reactions to US-supported initiatives.// [redacted]

//The developing countries claim that GATT has done little to safeguard their interests. They have tried to get special treatment for themselves included in most of the major agenda items, pushing such measures as further liberalization of trade in tropical products and the eventual elimination of textile and clothing quotas.// [redacted]

//The West European nations and Japan tend to view the meeting as a damage-limiting exercise. The Europeans have been especially cool to US proposals on agriculture and expanded GATT coverage because of the EC's common agricultural policy and numerous trade disputes with the US.// [redacted]

//Given these wide differences, the chances are great that any action taken will reflect the lowest common denominator and be closer to the position favored by the EC or the developing countries. The US, therefore, may find itself with little help in upholding the existing international trading system both at this week's meeting and at the economic summit in the spring.// [redacted]

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OAU: Summit Deadlock

Plans to open another OAU summit tomorrow in Tripoli may be postponed as members remain deadlocked over the seating of Chad. Ministerial sessions broke down Friday when 14 backers of President Habre walked out following a committee recommendation, which favored the position of Libya and other supporters of former President Goukouni, to have the issue submitted to the summit for settlement. OAU Chairman Moi has appealed to all members to attend the summit whether or not the problem is resolved.

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Comment: A boycott by the 14--mostly francophone moderates--would leave the summit short of a quorum. Moderates will have to weigh their support for Habre against the damage that a second summit boycott this year could inflict on the OAU. Libyan leader Qadhafi, who will become chairman of the OAU if the summit is convened, will have to balance his commitment to the radical position against his desire to host a successful summit and to address the current UN General Assembly session.

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